

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace Paragraph [0012] with the following paragraph rewritten in amendment format:

With reference to Figures 1 through 3 of the drawings, a boot seal constructed in accordance with the teachings of the present invention is generally indicated by reference numeral 10. The boot seal 10 is unitarily formed from a resilient material, such as natural or synthetic rubber or a suitable plastic, and is illustrated to include a flexible body portion 12, a coupling end 14 and a flange end 16. The boot seal 10 is shown in Figure 2 in conjunction with a mechanical joint 18 for transmitting rotary power. The mechanical joint 18 includes a first member, which is the internally splined output shaft 24 of a transfer case 22 in the particular example provided, and a second member, which is an externally splined shaft 20 that is associated with a propshaft 24a in the particular example provided. Those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the internally splined output shaft 24 and the externally splined shaft 20 are slidably connected to one another. Although the exemplary output shaft 24 is illustrated to include a male splined end 26 that matingly engages a mating female splined end 28 that is formed on the splined shaft 24, those skilled in the art will understand that various other means may be employed to couple the members of the mechanical joint 18 to facilitate the transmission of rotary power therebetween. Accordingly, the particular embodiment illustrated is not intended in any way to limit the scope of the present invention.

Please replace Paragraph [0015] with the following paragraph rewritten in amendment format:

The flange end 16 is coupled to a second end of the body portion 12 opposite the coupling end 14. The flange end 16 is illustrated to include a flange seal portion 50 and an annular lip 52. The flange seal portion 50 is configured to create a primary seal against the output shaft 20 to guard against the infiltration of moisture or debris into the body portion 12. In the particular embodiment illustrated, the flange seal portion 50 includes an attachment portion 54 that is configured to sealingly engage a mating groove 55 that is formed about the perimeter of the output shaft 24. As specifically shown in Figure 2, the mating groove 55 includes a first sidewall 55A and a second sidewall 55B that is spaced apart from the first sidewall 55A in an axial direction along the output shaft 20. Those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the mating groove 55 is illustrated in a condition where it is proximate but spaced apart from the axial end of the output shaft 20. Due to the resilient nature of the material from which the boot seal 10 is formed, the attachment portion 54 is configured to resiliently expand over the output shaft 24 during the installation of the boot seal 10 and thereafter constrict around the outside diameter of the output shaft 24 when aligned to the groove 55 to thereby frictionally engage the output shaft 24. As those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate, because the attachment portion 54 is matingly engaged to the mating groove 55, the attachment portion 54 abuts the first sidewall 55A as specifically shown in Figure 2 to thereby axially retain the flange seal portion 50 to the splined shaft 24. Construction in this manner is highly advantageous in that it eliminates the need for a

conventional boot clamp. To aid the technician in installing the boot seal 10, a chamfer 56 may be formed on a leading edge 58 of the flange seal portion 50.